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Letter to the Earl of Bute 1765





A

L E T T E R

TO THE

E—— of B——.



[Price SIX-PENCE.]

RPJCB

A
L E T T E R
TO THE
E — of B —.

Good Ministers will never be wanting to a Prince, who chuses them for their superior Parts, Experience, and Integrity; and who resolves to support them, as Henry the Fourth supported Sully, against Favourites, Mistresses, the Cabals of the Court, and the Factions of the State.

Lord Bolingbroke *of the State of the Nation.*



L O N D O N:

Printed for J. WILKIE, in St. Paul's Church-Yard.

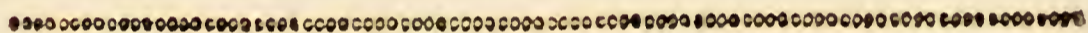
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RPJCB




A

LETTER, &c.



My LORD,

S little as the motto I
have made choice of,
may seem to apply it-
self to your Lordship, to the pre-
sent times, or to the present cir-
cumstances of things ; I have
nevertheless determined to make

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use of it as a thesis upon which to dissent a little, in the following pages ; perhaps, more to the edification, than to the entertainment, of your Lordship.

My Lord, it is the peculiar privilege of this country, and a privilege which we shall never forego, but with the last breath of our liberties, that we claim a right, not only of thinking freely, and of judging for ourselves, in all matters of concernment to the state, but a right of expressing our thoughts, and (under certain restrictions, which decency to the first magistrate of

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this country, and respect to the laws which parliament has established, may justly require) a right to communicate our sentiments to the public, to give out the alarm where we see danger to the safety of our constitution, or to the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom. My Lord, we are so far from regarding this freedom as a crime towards the public, that we are taught from our infancy to hold it as a duty to our fellow-citizens, upon the peril of living, in our own esteem, base, slavish, and degenerate traitors to the commonwealth.

Now, My Lord, it so happens, that public men are so closely connected with public transactions, that it is utterly impossible to give our opinions about the latter, without, in some measure, arraigning before our tribunal, the authors of such measures as we either praise or censure, and involving them in the commendation or condemnation we think fit to bestow upon their works. All this, My Lord, would be exceedingly unreasonable and improper, if we did not consider every public person, whether magistrate or minister, actor or adviser, as mere servants of the public,

public, entrusted with whatever share of power or authority they enjoy, merely for the utility of the public, and therefore amenable to the public, for every act of their vicegerency. Do not, therefore, My Lord, disdain this anonymous address, from one who pretends not to the honour of your friendship. That restless, busy, *doing*, and *undoing spirit*, which we call ambition, has rendered you an object too important on our scene, to suffer you to lie unnoticed, even in your retirement. The trouble I am giving you cannot be totally un-
 accep-

acceptable ; for great men wish to be drawn out to light ; and though, My Lord, when I bestow upon you the appellation of greatness, perhaps I may be brought to own, that for any thing personal, that distinguishes your Lordship, you might well be suffered to enjoy the soft slumbers of obscurity, yet surely, the borrowed lustre you are so ostentatiously vain of, may justly claim our attention : we allow in truth, to the stamp upon the coin, a value which the intrinsic brass would by no means be entitled to.

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My Lord, there are many things in nature, which, though the most powerful in their operation, are visible only in their effects. Whirlwinds, tempests, earthquakes, are not perceived till the ruin they scatter round prove sufficient evidences of their power. Your Lordship rather seems to resemble some of those invisible genii (not the genius of Britain) who, hovering about in darkness and mystery, watch the occasion to diffuse their secret and baleful influence over a devoted country. How, My Lord, am I to address you? as minister? No, My Lord: that burden you long since found
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yourself unequal to ; and having added to it by the weight of your own imprudence and indiscretion, flunk from it, in a moment of panic apprehension, leaving it be supported by stronger shoulders than your own. What then, My Lord, shall I call you ? the *abdicated minister* ? who, finding, at last, how little you could fill the station your ambition had accomplished, like an imprudent, but honest friend to your K——, your country, and, give me leave to say, to your own interest likewise, determined to draw back again into the private station, for which you felt your talents so much

much better qualified? No, My Lord, even that character you have renounced; as indeed, what character have you not assumed, renounced, and then, as vanity, passion, caprice, or fear, has prompted, claimed and disclaimed again! Is there then no appellation in our language for this minister, and no minister; this adviser without office or responsibility; this invisible agent; this secret spring of action; this terror to his country, and perturber of the public quiet? Yes, my countrymen, there is a name, not known indeed to our constitution, though too often, and too

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severely felt in our history ; it is the name of *Favourite*, ever hateful to British ears, and equally baneful to the safety and honour of the Prince, as to the prosperity of the people. Since, then, My Lord, this, of all others, the most dangerous public situation, is, however, that which the mixture of rashness and timidity, so strangely woven into your nature, has adopted ; give me leave to consider a little, and to speculate with your Lordship, upon the nature and office of a Favourite, and the success which your predecessors in that station have usually experienced in this country.

try. My Lord, If I was to give a definition of a Favourite, I should describe him as a subject fraught with selfishness and artifice, who, abusing the noble qualities of his master, to his own purposes, presumes to thrust himself between the affections of the Prince and people. He is not the servant of the people, for he is the reverse of every thing that is good to them; he hates, and is hated by them. He is not the servant of the crown, for he sullies and absorbs its glory. His pride assumes homage to itself; he affects to be the disposer of graces and honours, and to have all power de-

pend upon his will. He flights and neglects his duty to his sovereign in public, to demonstrate to mankind his influence in private. He disgusts all free spirits, and finds pretences to remove every faithful servant from his master. He revenges his own quarrels in his master's name: changes friends and enemies without regard to his master's interest, and gives the sanction of royalty to every gust of weakness or passion that rises in his breast. He fills the court with new men, his relations and dependants. He plays party against party. He is ever treating, accommodating, and nego-

negotiating, that, by keeping all men in suspense, they may have their attention always fixed upon himself. He is envious of the glory of others ; restless, and desirous of change ; fearing always, that frequent access to his master, diligent and faithful service, and long continuance in office, may create a rivalry, and become dangerous to his influence. He is insolent in his resentments, faithless to his engagements, ostentatious in his manners, and, to conclude, has a stile fitted only for the flatterers and sycophants by whom he is surrounded, and from whom he receives all his ideas.

Such,

Such, My Lord, is the picture I should draw at full length, of a Favourite ; and I believe it will be found to preserve its resemblance, with very little alterations, through all ages, and in all countries. How far your Lordship's character, virtues, and qualities, will permit you to assimilate yourself to it, you must determine with yourself, if you propose to persevere in that situation. I would however, before that resolution is irrevocably fixed, take leave to advise your Lordship to cast your eye, at least, over our own history, to see whether it is worth your while
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to take upon yourself so odious and contemptible a character, to disgrace your Prince, and to trample upon your country, for the reward which has almost constantly attended it, from the *Gavestones* and *Spencers*, down to *Carr* and *Villiers*, and the last example in the unfortunate Earl of *Stafford*.

But, My Lord, what is the state of a country groaning under the dominion of a Favourite? for, methinks, that should be taken into the consideration, however little weight it may have with you, in determining your resolution.

tion. My Lord, I will venture to say, that even were the Favourite disinterested, and well intentioned, which, from the nature of things, he can never be, even then, the nation governed under his influence, would never flourish. I say, a Favourite, not a favoured minister, and there is much difference between them. But, My Lord, when the Favourite is such as I have described above, and such, I fear, most Favourites will prove, to what extremities must a country be reduced by their folly and ambition! All the evils that can flow from a discontented people, a dis-

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gusted and offended nobility, and a government deprived of strength and vigour, must be the natural consequence of his reign. Good subjects will retire far off, factious spirits will advance; law will be perverted, Majesty insulted, discord fomented, till by degrees all order is over-born, and licentiousness, anarchy, and confusion universally prevail. Far be the omen from this country; but if it should ever come to pass, accursed be the hand through which the evil is brought upon us. My Lord, your Lordship and your posterity have now obtained a considerable property amongst us; let

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that at least prevail to interest you in the common safety ; and believe me, there are no honours or acquisitions you can bequeath to your family, that can compensate to them for the risking what they have already in possession, by throwing every thing into weakness and disorder. Add security, My Lord, to what you have acquired, and leave to them entire the laws and constitution of a free country : you can bequeath to them no better legacy.

My Lord, your influence has prevailed over this kingdom not yet five years, during which time

we have already owed to your versatile disposition, if I mistake not, no less than nine Secretaries of State actually in possession of the seals, four First Lords of the Treasury, five First Lords of the Admiralty, five First Lords of Trade and Plantations, besides those appointments to each of these departments, which proved abortive, where circumstances have prevented your projects, when perfected, from being carried into execution. Such has been your Lordship's wisdom, system, and consistency ! It is possible you may imagine, My Lord, that the public have no right to be inte-

rested in these changes, and that we are guilty of great impertinence, in meddling with affairs that do not belong to us. My Lord, must I repeat to you again, that the servants of the crown are the servants of the public; that they are appointed solely for the benefit of the public; paid by taxes levied upon the public; and therefore that we have a right to expect that they shall hold or lose their employments as the public good requires. If we should try our various changes in the political scheme by this test, we shall be best enabled to decide the motives

tives by which you have been actuated in them.

My Lord, the *opus magnum* of your life seems to have been what it is said you wish to have engraved upon your tomb, the putting a period to the war. But the merit of this measure, must, in my opinion, be determined principally by the use you purposed to make of the interval of peace. If, My Lord, you meant no more by it than to put a stop to the effusion of Christian blood, at the expence of much conquest and acquisition to be restored, it was truly a very pious, tender-hearted,

hearted, and good-natured enterprize: if you meant by it to secure yourself in power, and to bring down your situation to your talents, when you found you could not raise your talents to your situation; it was perhaps a prudent action: if you meant *then* to abdicate your power, and to gain leisure only for the play of making and unmaking ministers, it must be regarded only as a matter of pastime and amusement to you: in short, to be serious, nothing can make that peace deserve the appellations, which, I believe, have justly been bestowed upon it, of a wise, whole-

wholesome, and necessary measure, but the being penetrated with the distresses of this country, being sensibly alarmed at its danger, and thinking every day a year, till an occasion was procured to staunch the life-blood that was flowing out at every vein, and by every means to recruit that strength, upon which the future existence of this country must depend. My Lord, if we examine into your conduct, since that event, will it not be natural to conclude that you had no meaning in it at all. Your Lordship, if I mistake not, had chosen to yourself the head of the finances, for

for the display of your abilities, when you disappeared from your last ostensible situation. In that province it would have been natural to have expected from you the out-lines at least of that great plan that was to succeed upon the peace you had concluded. I cannot at this time recollect one instance of your æconomical attention to our revenue, unless it be the ever-memorable cyder-tax; and that, I believe, you was so kind as to promise to repeal, at the time you was determined to withdraw yourself from the situation of having it any longer in your power. Since that time we
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have heard of your Lordship only as often as it has pleased you to interrupt the public business, and to molest others in the execution of those plans which they thought essential towards the preservation of their country, and which therefore they have had the patience to make some progress in, notwithstanding the hinderances you gave them, but which you have now at last pretty effectually defeated.

My Lord, what is all this strange scene to end in? Do you wish the ruin of this country? or does fate envy us the greatness

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we have acquired by past successes, and degrade us to our utmost humiliation under your subjection! Let *Austria* and *Bourbon* confederate together, let every enemy of this country give the full scope to their resentments; *Britain* has nothing left to oppose them, but weakness, disorder, and dejection. What man will stand forth at this time, and under these circumstances, to attend the call of his Sovereign, or his Country? No man who has the pledge of an established reputation, will repose it in your hands, at your discretion! A few young and unexperienced noblemen,

men, now for the first time in office, together with the dregs of a vanquished opposition, may, indeed, be brought to trust your promises, to hold the helm they cannot govern, and by their weakness to increase your power. But, My Lord, the grave, the experienced, the capable, the efficient, you have so effectually driven from the counsels of our Sovereign; you have so happily succeeded in sowing jealousies and discord; and have, with so much artifice, weeded out, one after another, every man whose service could promise solidity to the King's government, and prospe-

city to the state ; that thinking men have now no hope remaining. The important moments, in which our harvest should be gathered, against the storms of winter, roll on neglected, and are sacrificed to your ambition.—
Pereunt & imputantur.

What then remains for us ? Must we tamely perish ? Is this great, glorious, and flourishing country, to become a victim to the caprice of one man, and that man a subject ? Is there no force left in the constitution to drag out this pernicious Favourite into light, and to emancipate our Sovereign

reign

reign and ourselves from the shame and burthen of his yoke? I trust there is that force, or our boasted constitution is a shadow. It is not, My Lord, the skulking at a distance, the thin veil of subterfuge and equivocation, the mean, little, paultry artifices of an intriguing spirit, by which the just resentments of an injured people can be long evaded. The grievances which are publickly known and felt, will not long wait for the redress of public, signal, and exemplary punishment. The grand inquest of the nation will not for ever be deluded, and will know how to oppose

oppose the boldest, and to overtake the wiles of the subtlest, of the enemies of their country.

Your Lordship will perceive, that in all I have had the honour to say above, I have touched only upon your public character. Your private manners, as well as the nation that gave you birth, neither move my contempt nor hatred. It is to me equally indifferent in what amusements you consume your leisure; what is the turn of your conversation, or the colour of your complexion; whether you was born in Middlesex, or beyond the Tweed; what
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is personal in your Lordship, is below our notice; what affects our welfare only, we have a right to interfere in.

If any thing contained within these sheets, My Lord, should be so fortunate to stir within your breast some faint emotion, whether of remorse, fear, shame, or a sensation compounded perhaps of all together; cherish, My Lord, the gracious instinct; ripen it into virtue, and endeavour, in some measure, to repair the injuries you have done your country, by voluntarily absenting yourself from it for ever.

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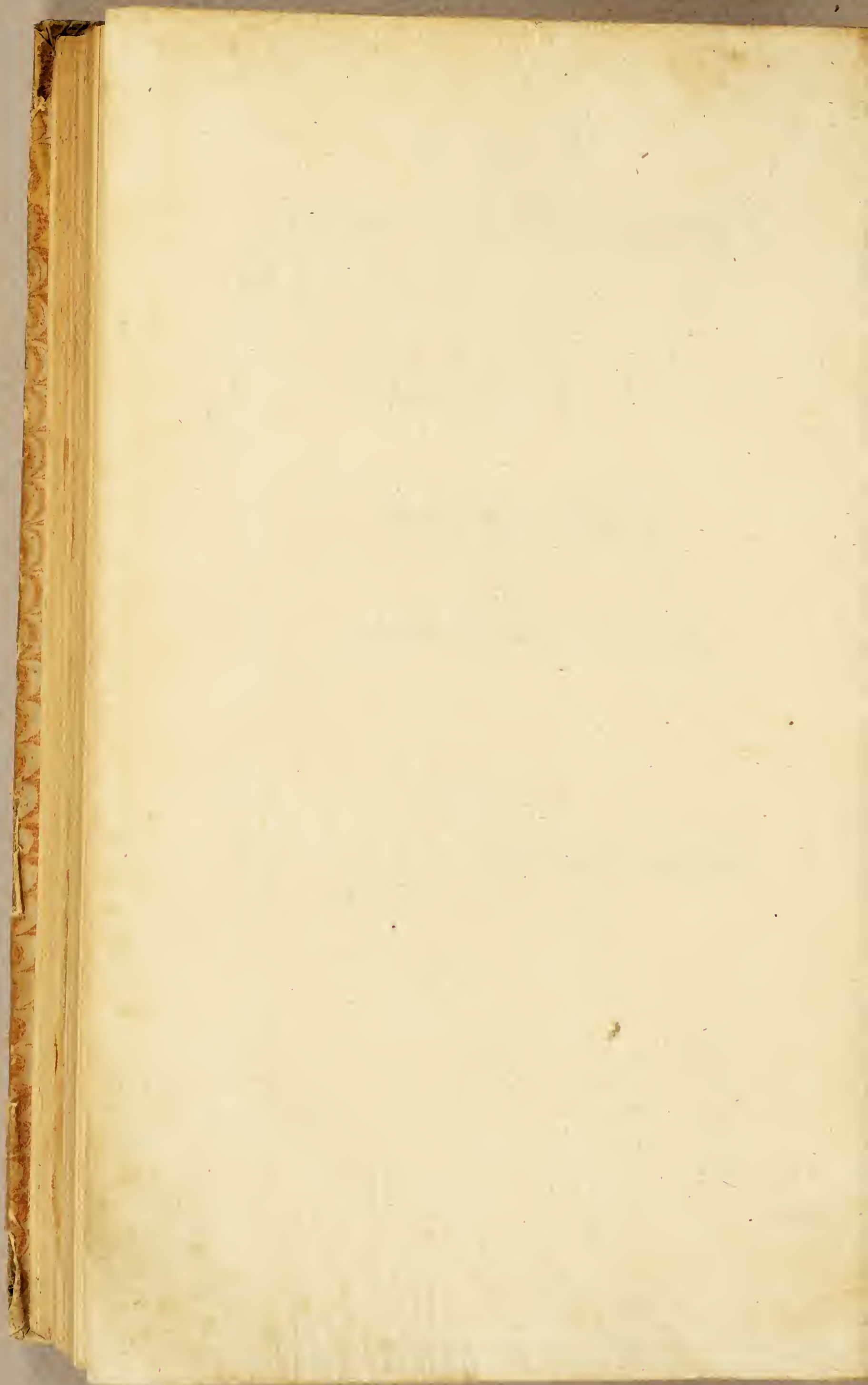
I have the honour to be, with
all due respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

most obedient Servant,

An ENGLISHMAN.



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